

To begin, watch...

“Leonard Bernstein: Young People’s Concerts
- What is a Melody, Part 1”

(copy and paste link into a new browser window)

<https://youtu.be/2AFovpvDRCI>

New Terms:

Melody - An organized series of pitches.

Tune - A type of melody that is a singable pattern of, like a song, complete in itself without further development.

Theme - A type of melody that creates a singable pattern that is developed throughout the piece. This type of melody is used as a primary mode of melody in orchestral music. (Themes often represent a specific person, place or idea.)

Motif - The smallest fragment of melody that can hold a thematic gesture.



Richard Wagner
(1813-1883)
Composer

- Early interests: literature (Shakespeare) and music (Beethoven)
- Early career as an opera conductor in France (very unhappy)
- Early opera compositions follow Romantic opera style
- Controversial because of anti-Semitic views
(music was used posthumously as pro-Nazi propaganda)

New Opera Style

Music Drama - new sub-genre of opera that united music and drama as equal partners

Gesamtkunstwerk - means “total art work”

A synthesis of all arts, each self-sufficient yet inextricable from one another

-The onstage drama is visual/verbal manifestation of the story.

-The orchestra functions as a musical manifestation of the drama.

Leitmotif - brief, “reoccurring musical theme, associated within a particular piece of music with a particular person, place or idea”... that is... “characterized by a single harmonic or rhythmic trait”

-A Leitmotif is capable of growth, development, and transformation according to the dramatic situation
= it has narrative ability

Leitmotifs are often used in film scores to connect larger ideas, such as in “Starwars”.

Read the following information about
Leitmotifs in Starwars:

(copy an paste the following links into a new browser window)

[academic.depauw.edu/aevars_web/honr101-02/webpages/spring2006/rooney\(jessica\)/starwarsleitmotif.htm](http://academic.depauw.edu/aevars_web/honr101-02/webpages/spring2006/rooney(jessica)/starwarsleitmotif.htm)

See Leitmotifs in action...

Main Theme:

Watch: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_D0ZQPqeJkk

Darth Vader Theme:

Read: [academic.depauw.edu/aevans_web/honr101-02/webpages/spring2006/rooney\(jessica\)/starwarsleitmotifdarthvader.htm](http://academic.depauw.edu/aevans_web/honr101-02/webpages/spring2006/rooney(jessica)/starwarsleitmotifdarthvader.htm)

Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hNv5sPu0C1E>

Force Theme:

Read: [academic.depauw.edu/aevans_web/honr101-02/webpages/spring2006/rooney\(jessica\)/starwarsleitmotifforce.htm](http://academic.depauw.edu/aevans_web/honr101-02/webpages/spring2006/rooney(jessica)/starwarsleitmotifforce.htm)

Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QrbAg3zkpg4>

Watch

“Leonard Bernstein: Young People’s Concerts
- What is a Melody, Part 2”

(copy and paste link into a new browser window)

<https://youtu.be/O09V4NQkOKI>

0’00-6:20”

Tristan and Isolde (1865)

Opera by Richard Wagner

-Read Synopsis of Opera Here:

[www.metopera.org/user-information/synopses-archive/
tristan-und-isolde](http://www.metopera.org/user-information/synopses-archive/tristan-und-isolde)

-Libretto written by Wagner in *Stabreim*, “*staff-rhyme*”,
a free poetic German style of poetry from the Middle Ages

-Avoided distinctions of aria/recitative (verse/prose)

-Text in German

-Stabreim is not a rhyme scheme, but a gathering of initial or
internal sounds of words

Stabrheim Example: “l”, “n”, “sch”
(from Act 2, *Tristan and Isolde*)
(copy and paste link into a new browser window)

Play: <https://youtu.be/rx4B9G2-lol?t=499>
(8:20-9:27)

Lösche des Lichtes letzten Schein!

Dass ganz sie sich neige, winke der Nacht!

Schon gross sie ihr Schweigen durch Hain und
Haus,

schon füllt sie das Herz mit wonnigem Graus.

O lösche das Licht nut aus,

lösche den scheuchenden Schein!

Lass' meinen Liebsten ein!

Wagner's Orchestration:

- Much larger orchestra than Verdi or Rossini
- Greater prominence of brass instruments and introduction of tubas
- Singers need more powerful voices to project over orchestra and endure length of operas
=new singer fachs (These voices are often referred to as “Wagnerian” soprano/mezzo/tenor/bass/etc.)

Leitmotif - “reoccurring musical theme, associated within a particular piece of music with a particular person, place or idea” that is “characterized by a single harmonic or rhythmic trait”

- Leitmotifs are musical representatives of narrative

- A Leitmotif is a brief musical figure that is capable of growth, development, and transformation or musical metamorphosis over time, according to the needs of the dramatic situation

Tonal Harmony is based on tension-release (**dissonance/consonance**)

- Delaying harmonic resolution (release of the tension)
challenges the expectations of the listener

- Fluctuating musical tension evokes psychological,
emotional, and sexual tension

- In *Tristan and Isolde* a single chord, The Tristan Chord,
functions as a single Leitmotif that the entire opera is based
upon. It is developed into many motifs that are used to
depict the narration in the opera.

Examples of *Leitmotifs* in *Tristan and Isolde*:

(copy and paste links into a new browser window)

1. *Longing and Desire*

(with *Tristan Chord* highlighted at the end)

<https://youtu.be/FcQeTCsQ5w4>

2. *Glance*

https://youtu.be/NE2gTGG6k_Y

3. *Magic Casket*

<https://youtu.be/Vjk9HaGEnvA>

4. *Love Potion*

https://youtu.be/bzQkCRTW_b4

Endless Melody - fluid and continuous musical writing without the normal divisions of aria/recitative/etc.

Throughout *Tristan and Isolde*, the tension continues to build throughout the opera until the resolution of the *Tristan Chord* in Isolde's "Liebestod" ("Love-Death") at the end of the opera.

Softly and gently
how he smiles,
how his eyes
fondly open
—do you see, friends?
do you not see?
how he shines
ever brighter.
Do you not see?

Star-haloed
rising higher

[...and ends...]

to drown,
to founder —
unconscious —
utmost joy!

Watch Isolde's *Liebestod* now:

(copy and paste link into a new browser window)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9680zhMmlqM>

Can you recognize any of the *Leitmotifs*?

Can you hear where the tension resolves at the end?